

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 SAA-01 SES-02 AID-05 ACDA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5573
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 3820

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, YE, YS
SUBJ: RADICALISM OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
YEMEN

BEGIN SUMMARY: PDRY IS NOT JUST ANOTHER MEMBER OF
ARAB "STEADFASTNESS" GROUP, LIKE SYRIA AND ALGERIA. IT
IS A TRUE RADICAL STATE. WE SHOULD WEIGH OUR WILLING-
NESS TO PROVIDE MILITARY AID TO YAR AGAINST PDRY
INTENTIONS AND MILITARY CAPABILITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH THE PURGES THAT HAVE FOLLOWED THE COUP AGAINST
SALIM RUBAYI ALI, TOTAL CONTROL IN PDRY HAS FALLEN INTO
THE HANDS OF A RELATIVELY SMALL GROUP OF NATIONAL FRONT
LOYALISTS WHO HAVE WILLINGLY SOLD THEMSELVES TO A
DISTINCTLY ALIEN FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

2. PDRY RADICALISM TODAY CONSISTS OF THE PRACTICE OF
THE EXPORT OF REVOLUTION, COLLECTIVIZATION OF AGRICULTURE
AND INDUSTRY, IDEOLOGICAL HOSTILITY TO ITS NEIGHBORS IN
THE PENINSULA, SOCIALIST INTERNATIONALISM RATHER THAN
NATIONALISM, AND HEAVY COMMITMENT TO TERRORISM AS A
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POLITICAL ACT. THE PDRY POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS WITH
ETHIOPIA AGAINST SOMALIA AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE,
AGAINST ERITREA FLY DIRECTLY IN THE FACE OF NATURAL SOUTH
ARABIAN TENDENCY TOWARDS COMMUNALITY OF INTERESTS WITH
FELLOW MUSLIMS. THE ROLE OF THE PARTY IN PDRY HAS
GROWN TO A POINT WHERE IT TOTALLY CONTROLS THE SOCIETY,
DOWN TO THE VILLAGE AND EVEN BLOCK LEVEL. ENFORCED

SCHOOLING OF CHILDREN, AWAY FROM THE CONTROL OF THE PARENTS, SEEKS TO BUILD A NEW GENERATION OF CHILDREN ALIGNED MORE WITH THE RED STAR THAN THE KORAN. THE REGIME'S "POPULARITY" TODAY IS SUCH THAT IT IS FORCED TO SEAL ITS BORDERS AGAINST THE FLIGHT OF ITS OWN PEOPLE AND TO LEVY EXORBITANT FEES AND GUARANTEES ON THOSE WISHING TO TRAVEL ABROAD LEGALLY UP TO AND INCLUDING THE TAKING OF HOSTAGES. TO BOLSTER ITS OWN ARMED FORCES, PDRY HAS TURNED TO COMMUNIST MERCENARIES SUCH AS THE CUBANS, EAST GERMANS, RUSSIANS, AND -- ACCORDING TO SOME SOURCES -- ETHIOPIANS, BULGARIANS, AND EVEN NORTH KOREANS. THE ETHIOPIANS ARE APPARENTLY RETURNING THE FAVOR DONE THEM BY PDRY AGAINST THE ERITREANS AND SOMALIS.

3. TRIMMING ITS SAILS TO THE PREVAILING WINDS, PDRY TODAY IS AVIDLY COURTING OTHER ARABS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT. ITS PIOUS PROCLAMATIONS OF PEACEFUL INTENTIONS ARE UTTERED IN THE HOPE OF SPLITTING THE ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT AND OFFSETTING ITS CONDEMNATION. IT IS FAIRLY CERTAIN IN THIS EMBASSY THAT ONCE PDRY SUCCEEDS IN SPLITTING THE ARAB RANKS AGAINST THE BOYCOTT -- AS IS BEING DONE IN KUWAIT -- THEN WE WILL SEE A RETURN TO THE TRUE NATURE OF PDRY -- EXPORT OF REVOLUTION, ASSASSINATION, AND SUBVERSION AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND THE GULF.

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4. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE PDRY ARMED FORCES TODAY MAY BE ALMOST AS LARGE AS THE COMBINED FORCES OF ALL ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE PENINSULA. THERE MAY BE 30,000 MEN IN ARMY, 10,000 MEN IN MILITIA (POPULAR FORCES), AND 10,000 MORE IN PARA-MILITARY POPULAR POLICE FORCE. THERE ARE OVER 120 MILITARY ATTACK AIRCRAFT, SAMs -- 3'S, 6'S AND 7'S, 300 TANKS (PERHAPS INCLUDING SOME T-62'S) AND THE DIRECT SUPPORT OF SOVIET NAVAL UNITS AND CUBAN TROOPS. WHILE PDRY IS FOR THE MOMENT BEING WRACKED WITH INTERNAL STRIFE, PARTICULARLY IN THE GOVERNORATES OUTSIDE OF ADEN, TIME IS ON THE SIDE OF THE PDRY REGIME. THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT IN PDRY CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPLOIT THE AVAILABLE TIME TO CONSOLIDATE ITS PRECARIOUS POSITION WITH THE HELP OF ITS SOVIET AND CUBAN ALLIES, PUT DOWN INTERNAL OPPOSITION, PURGE THE ARMED FORCES, AND DESTROY ANY VESTIGES OF INTERNAL OPPOSITION. THEN WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE PDRY BEGIN AGAIN ITS MULTI-POINTED ATTEMPTS AT SUBVERSION AGAINST THE YAR AND OMAN AND -- IN THE END -- SAUDI ARABIA. IT HAS FEW ALTERNATIVES. IT HAS FAILED TO PROVIDE FOR ITS PEOPLE. ITS ECONOMY IS COMPLETELY MILITARIZED. IT

IS INDIFFERENT TO KILLING. IT MUST JUSTIFY ITSELF BY
EXPANDING.

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5. GIVEN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAGILITY OF MANY OF THE
STATES OF THE REGION, ASSASSINATION STILL CARRIES MORE
WEIGHT HERE THAN ANY NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT OR BATTALIONS.
THE LIST OF PDRY-INVOLVED ASSASSINATIONS IS LENGTHY--
MANY PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, MANY NOT--COMMAND COUNCIL
MEMBER MOHAMMED ALI UTHMAN IN TAIZ, QADI ABDULLAH
AL-HAJRI IN LONDON, FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMED NU'MAN
IN BEIRUT, AHMED AL-GHASHMI IN SANA, PLUS UNNUMBERED
SHAYKHS, QADIS AND CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE SOUTHERN AND
MIDDLE REGIONS OF THE YAR.

6. PDRY LEADERSHIP, ALSO, IS KEENLY AWARE OF THE
CONSEQUENCES OF GOING AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE SOVIETS
AND IS, IN SUM, NO LONGER MASTER OF ITS HOWN HOUSE.
WHILE MUCH DISCUSSION HAS TAKEN PLACE OVER THE SUBJECT
OF BASE AGREEMENTS FOR THE SOVIETS IN PDRY, EMBASSY
SUBMITS THAT SUCH FORMALITIES ARE IRRELEVANT AND UN-
NECESSARY TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN PDRY. THE SOVIETS
CONTROL THE MILITARY USE OF THE AIRFIELDS AND ELECTRONIC

EQUIPMENT OF ANY SOPHISTICATION, AND CUBANS ARE
THERE TO ENFORCE THEIR WISHES. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN
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NO HARD INFORMATION ABOUT A FORMAL BASE-RIGHTS TREATY--
SUCH AS WAS THE CASE IN SOMALIA--FOR ALL INTENTS AND
PURPOSES, SUCH AN AGREEMENT DOES, WE BELIEVE, EXIST.
WE DON'T KNOW HOW FAR THE SOVIETS--ALTHOUGH BOLDER
THESE DAYS THAN EVER BEFORE--ARE PREPARED TO BACK UP
OR PRESS PDRY AGGRESSION BUT THEY ARE A HIGH BARRIER TO
PDRY RECONCILIATION WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

7. THE PDRY THREAT TO THE YAR AND OMAN CAN TAKE MANY
FORMS AMONG THE MORE SERIOUS ARE:

(A) CONTINUED SUPPORT TO THE SUBVERSION IN THE MIDDLE
REGIONS OF THE YAR SUCH AS DAMTH, NADIRA, JUBN.

ALSO, FORMER PARATROOP COMMANDER ABDULLAH 'ABD AL-ALIM
CAN BE EXPECTED TO RETURN PERIODICALLY TO THE HUIARIYA
REGION TO RALLY HIS FOLLOWERS AND TO EXACERBATE THE
TRADITIONAL ANTI-NORTHERNER FEELINGS PRESENT THERE.

(B) ASSASSINATION OF KEY YAR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THE
CAPITAL AND IN OUTLYING PROVINCES. THE POSSIBILITY STILL
EXISTS FOR A SUDDEN DESTABILIZATION OF THE YAR BY A
SWIFT, CALCULATED ACT OF ASSASSINATION AS WAS THE CASE
WITH AL-GHASHMI. THE UNDERGROUND INFRASTRUCTURE EXISTS
IN THE YAR FOR SUCH AN ACT AND DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS
OF YAR SECURITY OFFICIALS, FACTIONALISM, TRIBAL POLITICS,
BA'ATHI ACTIVITY AND OTHER PDRY-SUPPORTED ELEMENTS ALL
ARE HERE IN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH AND DETERMINATION TO MAKE
THE ASSASSINATION OPTION A VERY REAL THREAT. EMBASSY
JUDGES THAT WE HAVE NOT, UNFORTUNATELY SEEN THE LAST
OF ASSASSINATION IN THE YAR. WITH AID GIVEN BY PDRY
TO CARLOS AND OTHERS OF HIS ILK, PDRY HAS A CAPACITY
FOR LONG-RANGE TERRORISM, TOO

(C) DIRECT MILITARY ACTION. WHILE THE PDRY ARMED
FORCES ARE CURRENTLY IN A STATE OF DISARRAY, THIS SHOULD
NOT BE CONSIDERED A LONG-TERM SAFETY NET FOR THE YAR.

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THE 'ABBAS, SHALLAL, BASIBIB, 30TH, AND OTHER BRIGADES
MAY BE INCAPACITED, BUT THEY STILL EXIST AND CAN BE RE-
BUILT RAPIDLY. THE HIGHLY-POLITICIZED MILITIA, ALONG WITH
CUBAN "ADVISORS" HAVE TAKEN ON THE ROLE OF
PROTECTOR OF THE REGIME, PENDING THE FINAL REORGANIZATION
AND PURGE OF THE REGULAR ARMED FORCES. DESPITE ALL
THIS, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT THINK IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN
SIX MONTHS OR SO FOR PDRY TO PUT ITSELF IN A MILITARY
POSITION SUCH THAT THE MILITARY OPTION IS A VIABLE
CONSIDERATION FOR USE AGAINST THE YAR, UNHAMPERED BY
POLITICAL, TRIBAL, OR LEGAL RESTRAINTS AND WITH THE HELP
OF THE SOVIETS.

COMMENT: PDRY IS IN A LULL PERIOD AND IT APPEARS ITS
ARMED FORCES HAVE ASSUMED WHAT BASICALLY IS A DEFENSIVE
POSTURE. YAR MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE CONFIRMED PRIVATELY
THAT THEY FEEL NO IMMEDIATE THREAT FROM PDRY. NEVER-
THELESS, ITS INTENTIONS AND ITS CAPABILITIES ARE DEEPLY
WORRISOME, WE WHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE SOUTH IN
GAUGING OUR RESPONSE THE MILITARY NEEDS OF THE YAR.
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